

IN THE CLAIMS:

The following is a complete listing of claims in this application.

1. (original) A plate for use in wet offset printing, comprising at its surface ink-accepting surfaces corresponding to patterns to be printed; at least part of said ink-accepting surfaces being lightened, i.e. including small non ink-accepting lightening surfaces, characterized in that over at least part of said lightened ink-accepting surfaces, said small non ink-accepting lightening surfaces are distributed in at least two groups:

- a first group of small non ink-accepting surfaces with an area (areas) sufficient to be effective *per se* and in a quantity sufficient to lighten the ink-accepting surface(s) involved in lightening by at least 4%; and
- a second group of small non ink-accepting surfaces, not effective *per se* because their area(s) is (are) too small ; the mean area of said small non ink-accepting surfaces of said second group in general being less than 2/3 of the mean area of said small non ink-accepting surfaces of said first group; said small non ink-accepting surfaces of said first and second groups being distributed so as to minimize, advantageously avoid, any moiré effects.

2. (original) The plate according to claim 1, characterized in that said small non ink-accepting surfaces of said first and/or second groups are distributed in a random manner or in conventional screens and, for each color, in the orientation employed for the screen for said color.

3. (currently amended) The plate according to claim 1 ~~or claim 2~~, characterized in that when printing patterns with a stochastic screen, the small non ink-accepting surfaces of said first and second groups distributed in a (several)

conventional screen(s) are orientated for each color in the orientation normally used for printing said color.

4. (currently amended) The plate according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 3~~ claim 1, characterized in that the mean area of said small non ink-accepting surfaces of said second group is in the range $1/4$ to $2/3$, advantageously in the range $1/4$ to $1/2$ of the mean area of said small non ink-accepting surfaces of said first group.

5. (currently amended) The plate according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 4~~ claim 1, characterized in that:

- when printing patterns with an amplitude modulation screen, the area(s) of said small non ink-accepting surfaces of said first group remains (remain) smaller than the 95% white dot value, and advantageously smaller than the 98% white dot value of said screen; or

- when printing patterns with a stochastic screen, the area(s) of said small non ink-accepting surfaces of said first group is (are) always less than three times the area of the dot of said screen, and generally in the range 0.5 times to 2 times said area.

6. (currently amended) The plate according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 5~~ claim 1, characterized in that said small non ink-accepting surfaces of said first group are present in a quantity sufficient to lighten the ink-accepting surface(s) concerned with lightening by 4% to 20%, advantageously by 6% to 12%.

7. (currently amended) The plate according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 6~~ claim 1, characterized in that said small non ink-accepting surfaces of said second group are present in a quantity sufficient to lighten the ink-accepting surface(s) concerned with lightening by 4% to 35%, advantageously by 8% to 20%.

8. (currently amended) The plate according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 7~~ claim 1, characterized in that the percentage lightening of its ink-accepting surfaces is not constant.

9. (currently amended) The plate according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 8~~ claim 1, characterized in that none of said small non ink-accepting surfaces of said second group is in contact with a small non ink-accepting surface of said first group.

10. (currently amended) The plate according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 9~~ claim 1, characterized in that each of said small non ink-accepting surfaces of said first and second groups is inside the ink-accepting surface within which it is present.

11. (currently amended) The plate according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 10~~ claim 1, characterized in that said small non ink-accepting surfaces of said first group have the same area and/or, advantageously and, said small non ink-accepting surfaces of said second group have the same area.

12. (currently amended) A process for preparing a plate according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 11~~ claim 1, characterized in that it comprises copying said plate to generate the ink-accepting surfaces corresponding to the patterns to be printed on the surface of said plate as well as said small non ink-accepting lightening surfaces within said ink-accepting surfaces; said small non ink-accepting surfaces being copied:

- by a technique for exposing said plate through at least one film and/or a technique for exposing a precursor web of positive pre-sensitized plates through the opaque wall of a tube; and/or
- by a technique for directly exposing said plate with beams controlled by software; and/or
- by a projection technique.

13. (currently amended) A wet offset printing process, comprising:

- copying a plate, generating ink-accepting surfaces on the surface of said plate corresponding to the patterns to be printed and including small non ink-accepting lightening surfaces;
- fixing said copied plate to a plate cylinder;
- wetting then inking said fixed copied plate or inking it directly with an ink based on an ink/water mixture; and
- transferring the ink held on said lightened ink-accepting surfaces onto the blanket then onto the substrate to be printed in succession;

characterized in that the copy of said plate generates a plate according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 11~~ claim 1.